

VZCZCXRO3821
RR RUEH DU RUEHMR RUEHRN
DE RUEHSB #0026 0161418
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R 161418Z JAN 08
FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2379
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 1720
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 1846
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0446
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1123
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 1480
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 1902
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 4330
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RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 0973
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C O N F I D E N T I A L HARARE 000026

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AF/S FOR S. HILL,
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR E. LOKEN AND L. DOBBINS
STATE PASS TO NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/08/2013

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SUBJECT: MBEKI SEEKS FINAL AGREEMENT ON SADC TALKS

REF: HARARE 16

Classified By: Pol/Econ Chief Glenn Warren. Reason: 1.4 (d)

¶1. (C) MDC sources have told us that South African president Thabo Mbeki will travel to Harare Thursday to meet with Robert Mugabe and attempt to conclude an agreement between ZANU-PF and the MDC. Mbeki reportedly met personally with ZANU-PF negotiators over the weekend in South Africa. The most likely outcome, according to our sources, is a March election and implementation of a new constitution before the election. We also understand that Mbeki is concerned about the credibility of the election and will push for international observers.

¶2. (C) Comment: If in fact the agreement includes a March election, it's difficult to see what the MDC gains since there will be scant time to organize and take advantage of negotiated reforms. The MDC will still be facing a manipulated delimitation of parliamentary constituencies and a corrupt registration process. The MDC's traditional civil society allies demand broad consultation on constitutional reform, so they are likely to scorn an agreement that imposes a new constitution, whatever its merits. While the MDC may see no option but to contest elections and may feel that it will derive certain benefits from an agreement, an agreement will also (at least partially) legitimize Mugabe in the event of a ZANU-PF win. End Comment.
MCGEE